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SADAT: MODERN MASTER OF THE INDIRECT APPROACH

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INTRODUCTION

Egypt and the rest of the Arab world were caught in political limbo after the 1967 war with Israel. Israel had established strategic frontier defenses on the bordering Arab lands seized in the conflict. Over one million Arabs remained in occupied territories in the Sinai, Gaza Strip, West Bank and Golan Heights areas. The psychological impact on broken and defeated armies and the civilian population was telling. In a culture where honor and dignity were especially important, the humiliation and shame suffered as a result of being manhandled in the “Six Day War” had to be redressed. President Assad of Syria stated that, “the next battle would not be a fight against Zionism, imperialism or Jews, but a battle for honor and dignity.”¹

The Arabs desired a political solution to regain their captured land, but the Israelis consolidated those areas following their victory and began to permanently settle on them. Anwar Sadat, the President of Egypt, increasingly was frustrated by the failure of diplomatic efforts to dislodge the Israelis from the occupied territory. From a position of weakness, the Arabs were unable to negotiate an acceptable settlement with Israel or gain the attention of the superpowers to broker a peaceful, equitable outcome to the ongoing conflict. Although he warned of an impending “Battle of Destiny” every year from 1970 through 1973, Sadat’s lack of follow up began to threaten his credibility. “Everyone has fallen asleep over the Middle East crisis,” he said, “the time has come for a shock!”²

¹ The October War, A Political-Military Assessment, pg. 32

² The October War, A Political-Military Assessment, pg. 30

It was this “no peace, no war” state of affairs that precipitated the Arab decision to break the existing political deadlock through military means. An insightful statesman and strategist, Sadat realized that he lacked the power or resources to win an all out war with Israel. However, he did have a firm grasp of the elements of statecraft and a unique vision for employing them. His plan to execute a joint, limited war to achieve Egyptian and Arab national political objectives and his shaping of the international political environment in support of this effort was brilliant. His success is a lasting testament to the effectiveness of the “indirect approach.” Using the Diebel model for developing National Security Strategy and the Course II Framework for Military Strategy, this paper will show how Sadat effectively conceptualized and employed available means to attain his foreign policy and domestic ends.

ASSUMPTIONS ABOUT THE NATION AND THE WORLD

By 1972, Sadat realized that he had no options left other than military action to resolve the Arab situation. Every attempt at negotiation had failed. Efforts to engage the US and USSR to broker a deal produced little result. The Arabs became skeptical about the superpowers ability or desire to change the situation after the Nixon/Brezhnev summit in 1972 endorsed further détente. The superpowers could not, or would not, create conditions suitable for a settlement in favor of the Arabs. Peace, or the absence of conflict, was good for new Soviet – American diplomatic initiatives. Egypt and Syria couldn’t make demands or seek concessions unless they were able to bargain from a

position of strength. Henry Kissinger told Egyptian National Security Advisor Hafiz Ismail:

My advice to Sadat is to be realistic. We live in a world of facts and we can't build on hopes and fantasy. The fact is you have been defeated; so don't ask for a victors spoils. There have to be concessions on your part so that America can help you. How is it possible in your defeat to impose conditions on the other party? You can either change the facts, and consequently our perceptions will naturally change with regard to a solution, or you can't change the facts, in which case solutions other than the ones you are offering will have to be found to suit your circumstances. **I hope that what I am saying is clear.**³

Kissinger's message implied that the United States could do nothing to help so long as Egypt was the defeated party and Israel maintained her superiority. His advice catalyzed Sadat's decision to "change the facts" in order to gain bargaining power.

Arab agreements reached at the Khartoum Summit in 1967 prohibited direct negotiations with the Israelis. Sadat honored these guidelines though they restricted his options. There were to be no discussions with the Israelis, no recognition of Israel, and no settlements. The Arab position was that no land should remain in Israeli hands. There was no room for negotiation and immense pressure and consensus against unilateral Arab deals.

Egypt was on the verge of economic and social collapse. The military had remained mobilized since 1967 putting a huge strain on the national budget. Sadat briefed his National Security Council in 1973 that, "Our economy has fallen below zero. We have commitments that we should but cannot meet by the end of the year. In three

³ The October 1973 War, pg. 176

months time we won't have enough bread in the pantry.”⁴ The drain on human resources was critical as the army swelled to over 300,000 soldiers and conscription had been extended from five to six years. Preparations and training for a war that never came were depleting resources and increasing internal political pressure. Inaction, and the prolonged sacrifice of the Egyptian people, began to produce internal domestic dissent. In Cairo, students rioted against the government.

Egypt's military, professionals and conscripts alike, was edgy and looking for a fight. Relations with the Soviet Union, Egypt's benefactor, were fizzling. The Soviets denied or never filled Egyptian requests for arms. The Egyptians were “fed up” with Soviet military advisors who held neither respect nor confidence in Arab ability to fight or win. The USSR inspired coup to install former Vice President Ali Sabry, a pro-Soviet communist, to power destroyed any trust that Sadat may have had in the Soviets. His Presidency and Egypt's national survival were in peril. “If we remain passive,” he said, “our cause will disintegrate and die. We have to manage our affairs with whatever we have at hand.”⁵ He made the decision for war.

Israel continued to consolidate its strength. Victorious in war, well equipped militarily, trained and ready, and firmly backed by the United States, its focus was on increasing security for survival. A settlement with the Arabs was not necessary. Moshe Dayan summarized the Israeli position in 1972 when he stated, “The peace Israel needs was accomplished in 1967. We are working towards an informal peace with the Arabs; we do not need a formal peace. To try to achieve a formal peace would perhaps be

⁴ The October 1973 War, pg. 186

⁵ The October 1973 War, pg. 180

detrimental to the situation we are trying to preserve, which is consolidating the status quo resulting from the war and to transform it into an unofficial peace. I cannot accept anything but a peace based on strength which will give Israel safe borders.”⁶ Israel’s goal was to continue expanding, settling, and manipulating international public opinion into accepting a *fait accompli*.

In a democracy, developing consensus on policy is not always simple. Domestically in Israel, several plans were proposed for settling the issue of the occupied territories. The Gahal party wanted to retain all of the occupied territory. By biblical right, they believed the land was Israel’s. It enhanced security. Moshe Dayan favored economically integrating the territories and giving them limited self-rule. Pinhas Sapir feared the burden of ruling a large Arab population. He recommended giving the West Bank to Jordan. The Allon plan enjoyed the most support. Israel would retain key strategic points along the Jordan River, in Sharm-al-Sheik, Golan, Gaza and East Jerusalem to expand Israel’s security buffer. Using the remaining territories, diplomats could negotiate a settlement with the Arabs. Unfortunately, these plans could not be reconciled with Arab demands. All diplomatic efforts between 1967 and 1972 failed because of the “territory” issue.

In 1972, Israel had other problems besides deciding how to deal with the spoils of victory. The 1967 war had been costly, and continued mobilization of the army in response to Arab threats was breaking the back of the domestic economy. Each alert and general deployment carried a \$10 million price tag. The government became hesitant to respond until threat indications and warning were overwhelming.

⁶ The October 1973 War, pg. 184

Geography did not favor Israel. Surrounded by four hostile countries and her back to the sea, Israel's "bunker mentality" caused her to take unilateral, aggressive actions to ensure her security that alienated enemies and strained relations with friends. By 1972, Israel was all but isolated from the international community, except for the United States. Egyptian control of the Red Sea and the Suez Canal limited Israeli trade and re-supply, critical to their economic and military survival.

Always having won military actions began to engender negative effects. The Israelis felt so superior to the Arabs that they believed there was no possibility of being surprised or defeated. Many Israelis actually began to believe in a "civilization gap" which had given them an enormous technological advantage over the Arabs. No consideration was given to the fact that many of the weapons, and much of the intelligence required to win those battles, came from the US. Complacency had set in.

Internationally, the world was wrapped in the Cold War. Nations were either aligned with the Soviet communists, or partners for democracy with the "free" West. The primary focus of the United States was to maintain a global balance of power. The Nixon administration had attempted through détente to secure stable relationships with the Soviets and Chinese. In the Middle East, the United States steadfastly remained committed to Israel, but was concerned with the prospect that escalation of the ongoing conflict there might result in a superpower confrontation.

The Soviets were the primary supplier of arms, assistance and "advisors" to many Arab nations. Egypt and Syria were the key bridgeheads for USSR presence in the area. Although relations were superficially stable, Egyptian nationalism and condescending Soviet attitudes toward the Egyptians put a strain on their alliance. Both superpowers

sought moderation and status quo in the Middle East as they grappled with stabilizing the international political environment.

Economically, an energy crisis held the world hostage and threatened to bankrupt national economies. Blackmail and coercion became the instruments some oil producing nations used to influence domestic and international decision-making during this period.

INTERESTS AND THREATS

Anwar Sadat intuitively was aware of these situations as he began to formulate his plan for recovery in 1972. Opportunities existed for change. The key was being able to coordinate the elements of statecraft to achieve his goal – survival. There was no real threat of Israel initiating conflict, but war was necessary to regain lost territory and free over one million Arabs trapped in occupied lands. He needed to reestablish prosperity. This was impossible while maintaining a mobilized army to fight the “war of destiny.” The state of “no war – no peace” had to be ended. The drain on human and material resources and the loss of revenue from closing the Suez Canal could only be regenerated by improving Egyptian security and self-confidence. Sadat needed to renew the broken spirit of the Egyptian people. He concluded that only decisive military victory could overturn sacrifice, suffering, and defeatism.

Launching a limited war was fraught with risk. The primary threat was defeat, which would certainly mean the end of Sadat’s rule. Without a well orchestrated plan and coordinated effort another loss was a real possibility. However, prolonged mobilization without visible action would produce the same result. The continued loss of

revenue and resources would cause the government to collapse. This was a certainty. There was no choice but war.

Further delay might mean going it alone. The loss of Arab cohesion, specifically the Egyptian/Syrian coalition, could increase the human and material cost of war to a level unacceptable to the Egyptian people. By pursuing war, the Egyptians risked losing the support of their primary benefactor, the USSR. Both superpowers sought moderation in the area and a noncompliant partner might not be worth supporting. Without the right Soviet weapons, winning the war, even a limited one, would be difficult at best.

The timing for Sadat to move was propitious. The prospects for taking advantage of the energy crisis, developments in the international political environment, and the Israeli domestic situation were positive. Controlling the supply of oil, Middle Eastern nations had the ability to “buy” support. Japan, Europe, and the United States felt the economic pressure of high priced energy. The US and Israel stood alone in the UN as countries pledged support to the Arabs to keep the oil flowing.

The Arab coalition was their strongest ever. Egypt considered Saudi Arabia, Syria, Jordan, and Libya close partners. Kuwait, Lebanon, Algeria, Tunisia, and almost all of Africa pledged support. The Organization of African Unity passed a resolution in May 1973 condemning Israel, and over 80 percent of the African countries severed diplomatic relations with Israel. Sadat believed he could mobilize international public opinion to pressure the superpowers and Israel to work for a settlement. He recognized that he must take action before the Arab world reverted to more normal patterns of bickering.

Israel was vulnerable. Complacency, economic hardship, and political infighting distracted her. Upcoming elections would decide the fate of the occupied territories. The Labor Party push to buy and settle on Arab land through the Jewish Development Agency had mobilized Arabs to action. Unrest in the West Bank and Gaza threatened security and led many to question whether integration was in Israel's best interest.

The time was right for leveraging the superpowers to achieve Arab goals. Sadat needed offensive weapons to conduct the war. The Soviets needed to maintain a presence in the Middle East. Both superpowers needed political moderation in the area to avoid a conflict that might escalate into a confrontation disrupting the global stability they hoped to achieve through détente. Deftly employing both carrot and stick, Sadat cajoled the Soviets into providing him arms. Threatening to sever relations with the USSR and expelling military advisors when weapons shipments failed to be delivered, Sadat parried back the Soviets and demonstrated his resolve. Then, not breaking ties altogether, he granted them a five year extension on port usage to keep them in the game. Ultimately, he obtained the support he required. Employing an indirect approach, Sadat had settled on a course for war with a thorough understanding of the risks and opportunities involved.

OBJECTIVES

Strategically, Sadat established for Egypt clear, realistic, national foreign policy objectives to govern his relations with Israel:

1. Defeat the Israeli army in the Sinai and Syrian plateau

2. Inflict heavy human and material losses on the Israelis
3. Heighten the concern of the superpowers to coerce them to broker a deal
4. Pave the way for liberation of the occupied territories
5. Restore Arab pride
6. Undermine the Israeli theory of security
7. Force Israeli concessions
8. Engage the United State

Achieving these objectives fundamentally would change the situation. The goals were desirable: to restore Egypt's borders, to renew confidence and morale, and to repatriate Arabs in the occupied territories. Sadat had no other alternative. The war was one of political and national survival. Cost and risk were irrelevant considerations, war was the only option left, and the prospect of winning was not necessary to inspire the troops. The alternative, failure, meant the end of Egypt. That thought alone was enough to galvanize and mobilize the country.

With a little luck, the correct military strategy, and concerted diplomatic efforts, the stated objectives were feasible. Though primarily defensive, limited military offensive gains could recapture lost territory through surprise, deception and speed. The army already was mobilized. Consensus, domestic and international, supported the Arab effort. The necessary weapons finally were arriving. The tools were available to engage Israel.

The only constraints that remained were readiness and timing. The formation of the Federation Command Headquarters and the development of the campaign plan in January 1973 removed these obstacles. Sadat and Assad chose a date to initiate hostilities,

notified units of their objectives, began specific training, and implemented the strategic policy plan. The only questions unanswered were: how would the superpowers react to the conflict, and would negotiations be able to address the separate needs of the different Arab states involved during the subsequent peace process?

POWER AND RESOURCES

The final aspects of developing the campaign plan were identifying and mustering resources. Sadat considered both potential and existing elements of power. He realized that seven years of mobilization and war had exhausted capital and human resources.

The Egyptian army was deployed, equipped, trained, and ready for a fight. The fielded force was superior in numbers to that of Israel - 300,000 active duty soldiers compared to 80,000. A quick, decisive war was to Egypt's advantage.

Beside the military, the Egyptians could count on the support of three million Arabs, two million displaced Palestinians and one million Egyptians trapped in the Sinai. A mobilized civilian militia could be a formidable force. With the addition of the Syrian army in a two front war, the problem for Israel was formidable.

Soviet military aid finally arrived. Although most SAM systems and aircraft were older models, they appeared sufficient to carry the attack across the Suez and meet the limited objectives Sadat envisioned for the campaign. Additional military aid flowed in from other Arab countries and Egyptian allies. Egypt received and fielded tanks, munitions, and artillery pieces. However, the Soviets failed to provide Sadat with deep reconnaissance.

Sadat manipulated the Arab front, the African front, and the rest of the international scene to isolate the US and Israel. A mobilized international community brought immense pressure to bear on Israel. Following the Israeli assassination of three Palestinians in Beirut in July 1973, the United Nations Security Council endorsed a resolution favoring the Arabs but vetoed by the U.S. 14-1. More than 100 countries worldwide supported the Arabs and Egypt. Never had the nations of the Middle East so closely come together.

Sadat had several “potential” resources available. The most important was the oil weapon. Through embargo and production cutbacks, the Middle East oil producing nations were able to threaten economies and coerce support for their positions. Pro-western European nations and Japan succumbed to this pressure supporting the Arabs during the crisis. Arab ability to generate large oil revenues was crucial. They could replace military hardware without civilian economic sacrifice.

The Egyptian people were a great resource. They outnumbered Israelis, 29 million to three million, and would provide the manpower necessary for a prolonged war. Israel’s inability to sustain losses at all clearly affected their military strategy.

PLANS AND PRIORITIES

Sadat’s political objective was to break the stalemate and persuade the superpowers that the Middle East crisis was too important to remain indefinitely unresolved. He shrewdly recognized that Israel’s center of gravity, its military, depended heavily on its alliance with the United States. His military objective to

implement that political vision required him to secure Sinai land in an offensive operation that would shatter the Israeli theory of security and force the United States into the political solution – the indirect approach. “If we could recapture even 4 inches of Sinai territory...and establish ourselves there so firmly that no power on earth could dislodge us, then the whole situation would change – east, west, all over.”⁷ Sadat would demonstrate to the Israelis that security based on military and political intimidation would not provide them the protection they desired. He sought to upset the foundation of Israel’s national security that was built on secure borders, the maintenance of the initiative and the power of deterrence, and on the necessity of fighting Arabs one at a time with the guaranteed support of the United States. Challenging the Israeli theory of security with military action required inflicting the greatest possible destruction on Israeli forces to demonstrate that continued occupation of the Sinai was costly and ineffective to the Israeli security.⁸ Upon reaching a point where Israeli forces were severely damaged, and having acquired the attention of the superpowers, Sadat would seek political engagement with the superpowers, primarily the United States, to secure a peace that guaranteed the return of Egyptian and Arab lands.

The Egyptian “War of Attrition” with Israel since 1967 had exhausted its usefulness. Operationally, Sadat had to decide between a limited war and a war of attrition. Sadat desired to use military power in a limited war to attack Israel’s defenders on two fronts and sought Assad’s help in the endeavor. Assad agreed to a joint Syrian and Egyptian military offensive with the purpose of changing the balance of political and

⁷ In Search of Identity, The October War, pg. 244

⁸ The October 1973 War, pg. 188

military power in the Middle East. They established a Federal Command Headquarters to coordinate independent military efforts on two fronts. The Egyptian plan was to be a limited conventional offensive with reliance on defensive tactics. Their goal was to establish a bridgehead across the Suez Canal on a wide front, capture the Israeli Bar-Lev line, and establish five bridgeheads to a depth of six to eight miles on the east bank of the canal. Egyptian troops were to inflict the highest possible casualties on Israeli forces and defeat anticipated counterattacks. Syria was to launch an offensive to penetrate Israeli defenses in the Golan Heights, destroy Israeli defenses there, and capture the eastern bank of the Jordan River and Lake Tiberias.

Egypt had the worthy and moral cause of reclaiming its historical territory to provide a just and legal cause for going to war. Sadat could capitalize on both the moral dedication of his 300,000 army regulars and their resolute determination in defense. Through limited engagements with Israeli forces during the “War of Attrition,” Egyptian armed forces had gained confidence in their readiness training and SAM capabilities. Their air defenses extended over the Canal Zone and Israeli planes had learned to avoid them. Though the predominantly defensive nature of their Soviet weapons constrained their offensive options, the Egyptian army exploited the advantages of those advanced defensive technologies to deadly effectiveness. The Israeli doctrine for attack was to be used against them.

Both the Suez Canal and the Bar-Lev defenses were formidable barriers. Egypt’s air defenses were static and immobile, though lethal within their envelope. Without a surplus in armored transport, its infantry predominantly were truck mounted and restricted to roads that limited its cross-terrain capability. Numerically, the Egyptian

army provided no more than parity with the mobilized Israeli army, and its Navy was vulnerable to air attack. Of significance, Egypt lacked deep reconnaissance on the Sinai and into Israel proper, and the Soviets would provide none. Egypt would be unable to discern the Israeli reaction, intentions, and counteroffensive until the latter engaged along the Suez front.

Israel possessed a strong spirit of survival. She had trained men in arms and a rapid mobilization system based on the Swedish model. Foremost among Israeli advantages was air power. Israel possessed America's most modern fighter aircraft with the most advanced avionics, electronics, and weapons. She possessed an advanced training capability, superb technical and military skills, and her pilots benefited from several thousand hours experience in the air. Her electronic early warning capability was among the best in the world, and she received reconnaissance support from her benefactor, the United States. She could count on immediate US financial and technical aid in time of peril. Her defenses along the Suez Canal, the Bar-Lev line, were based on a water obstacle (the canal), fortified installations on the east bank, and on several reserves of armored and mechanized forces organized in successive echelons in the rear.

Hostage to its geography, Israel's borders extended for over 500 miles astride four hostile Arab neighbors – Egypt, Jordan, Lebanon, and Syria. With a standing army of 80,000 and a mobilized force of over 300,000, Israel's inflated defense commitment overstrained its economy and exacerbated its inability to sustain a prolonged war. Recurrent mobilization could be ruinous to the Israeli economy. Its inability to withstand manpower losses and long extended lines of communication to its defenses on the Sinai were key weaknesses Egypt sought to exploit. Total surprise could give Egypt a

numerical superiority with her 300,000 active soldiers. Big losses on the Sinai could have a great divisive effect on Israeli civilian morale and military thought and behavior.

Israel's blind spot was the arrogance of her civilian and military leadership; a characteristic Egypt sought to exploit. The Israelis were overconfident in their military power and were accustomed to "terrorizing" the Arabs into incapacity to act. They were convinced that the Bar-Lev was impenetrable and beyond Arab capability. The Bar-Lev had two significant weaknesses: extended lines of communication and a long defensive frontage on the Suez Canal. Israel's defenders on the Sinai were overextended. Her leaders believed the Egyptian leadership was too weak to plan and execute a strategic offensive. Israel believed Arab unity was a farce, and a cooperative strategy between the Arabs all but impossible. Worse, convinced of her invincibility, Israel became complacent. These beliefs led the Israelis to draw wrong conclusions. The Egyptians were counting on that and used it to advantage.

It was impossible for Egypt to launch a large-scale offensive to destroy the Israeli concentrations in the Sinai or to force a withdrawal. All her capabilities would permit was a limited attack with the aim to cross the canal, destroy the Bar-Lev line, and then take up a defensive posture. Surprise was essential to success. A more ambitious move would require different equipment and training from the primarily defensive materiel obtained from the Soviets. Fundamental to that conclusion was the weakness of the Egyptian Air Force. Egypt was compelled to avoid chance air encounters with superior Israeli air power. It had to use its air power for sudden attacks where Israeli air cover was least likely. Unless Egypt deployed its air force cautiously, it would lose it.

The second factor necessitating a limited operation was the offensive limitation of Soviet supplied surface-to-air missile (SAM) systems. The SAMs were static, and ground forces moving outside their protective envelope would court disaster. The SAMs had to remain West of the Suez Canal, out of the range of Israel's artillery.

Egypt needed to force the Israelis to fight under unfavorable conditions. Israel had to mobilize nearly one fifth of its population in time of war. It could not sustain that level of effort for long without engendering damage to its economy. The Israelis, therefore, had two priorities. The first was to avoid casualties and the other was to fight a "blitzkrieg" campaign. A conflict prolonged for months would cripple them. If, having crossed the canal, the Egyptians could consolidate their positions six to eight miles to the east; they could compel a hard choice on the Israeli's. The Israeli's would have to assault the dug-in Egyptian positions under the protective SAM umbrella. The Egyptians would have the chance to inflict heavy losses from air and ground attack. The Egyptians could prolong the conflict at will and at minimum cost.

The Egyptian plan to cross the canal had to be on the widest possible front. A river assault on a small concentrated front would have provided a well defined target for Israeli air strikes as Egyptians massed on the west bank of the Suez and during the crossing itself. At the outset, Egyptian infantry divisions were in defensive positions west of the canal, each responsible for a sector of the waterway. A transition to attack in the same sectors would simplify things as compared to massing for a concentrated cross-canal assault. Assault forces could stay in defensive positions until the last moment retaining the element of surprise. Construction of new defense works in a small concentrated front could have alerted the Israelis and attracted a pre-emptive strike.

An Egyptian wide-front crossing ensured that if the Israelis counterattacked along the whole front, their effort would be diluted and Egypt's tanks and precision guided munitions (PGM) equipped infantry would stand a better chance of beating them. The SAMs would stand a better chance against a lower density of aircraft. A general offensive would compel the Israelis to disperse air strikes against attacking forces weakening their effect and deceive them as to the real axis of attack. Should Israel concentrate on a single bridgehead, Egyptian reinforcements could be rushed in from the other bridgeheads to repel the attack. Israel would be unable to mass air assets and delay and disrupt Egyptian reactions on land.

EXECUTION

Egypt skillfully executed its military campaign plan and expertly used the tools of statecraft to enable victory in this limited engagement. The attack totally surprised Israel. Months of Egyptian military preparation and mobilization dulled Israeli senses leading to complacency and vulnerability. Delayed deployment decisions, based on financial considerations, allowed Egypt to achieve its limited objectives within the first few hours of the war. Sadat had flawlessly shaped the battle and the battlefield through deception, coalition, coordination, diplomacy, ingenuity and superb planning. In the first three days of the war Israel lost one-third of its Air Force. After four days of combat, a "save Israel" message emanated loud and clear from Tel Aviv. The United States began to supply much needed replacement tanks, intelligence, counter-measures and weapons to Israel. After two weeks of escalating losses, it was clear that even with United States support,

the prospect of pushing the Egyptians back across the Suez Canal without taking catastrophic losses was low. Henry Kissinger told Golda Meir that, “You’ve lost the war, and you must be prepared for this.”⁹ The superpowers intervened in order to stop the bloodshed and establish peace. After 19 days Sadat accepted a ceasefire when he realized he was no longer fighting Israel alone.

CONCLUSION

The aftermath of the “Six Hour War” produced lasting results. Sadat “achieved his fundamental objectives of shaking belief in Israel’s invincibility and Arab impotence, and this transformed the psychological basis of the negotiating stalemate.”¹⁰ He achieved the limited military objectives he established for the war. The Arabs regained their honor and dignity, and Egypt recovered those lands lost in the 1967 war. Egypt had started a tactically unwinnable war to restore self-respect and national pride. He succeeded, indirectly achieving his strategic objectives as the dust settled from the peace process.

We are still living with the issues that were not resolved. The current Israeli-Palestinian crisis is just one. What is clear is that President Anwar Sadat changed Egypt’s course profoundly. “Rare is the statesman who at the beginning of a war has so clear a perception of its political objectives, and rarer still is a war fought to lay the basis for moderation in its aftermath.”¹¹ Sadat was just such a rare statesman, and his use of

⁹ In Search of Identity, The October War, pg. 255

¹⁰ Why We Were Surprised, Years of Upheaval, pg. 459

¹¹ Why We Were Surprised, Years of Upheaval, pg. 460

the indirect approach and limited war laid the foundation for moderation and real peace in the Middle East.